

2.

I have been able to learn nothing about the  
author of this sermon.





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A  
S E R M O N

Occasioned by the

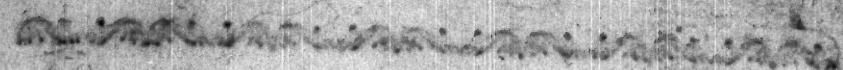
D E A T H  
O F

Mr. HENRY GARDINER.

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[PRICE SIX-PENCE.]

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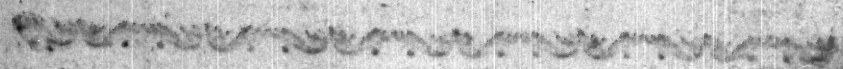
# SERMON

Occasioned by the

D E T H



MR. HENRY GARDINER



[Price Six Pence.]



The Blessedness of the Righteous at Death.

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A 2  
S E R M O N

Occasioned by the  
D E A T H  
O F

Mr. HENRY GARDINER,

Late of W I N S T O N,

And a Member of the Church of Protestant  
Dissenters at DEBENHAM;

Who departed this Life December 28, 1770;  
In the 80th Year of his Age:

PREACHED AT  
DEBENHAM IN SUFFOLK,  
JANUARY 6, 1771.

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By DANIEL BOCKING. 16

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Published at the Request of Mr. Gardiner's Relations, & other Friends.

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IPSWICH: Printed by W. JACKSON.

[PRICE SIX-PENCE.]

THE

SERMON

DEATH

MR HENRY GARDNER

OF WILKINSON



FEDERAL

1847

BY DANIEL BUCKING

WILKINSON



## Revelations 14, 13.

*Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth : Yea, saith the spirit ; that they may rest from their labours ; and their works do follow them.*

**A**LL the living know that they must die, yet this solemn event is so little thought of, and so seldom prepared for, that every instance of mortality calls for our serious reflections, and speaks to us with a loud voice to consider our latter end, and to prepare for that solemn hour, when soul and body must be separated ; when we shall have done with the things of time, and must wing our flight to the distant regions of the eternal World, where the state of our existence will be endless and unalterable. And since the character of mankind in the present State, is of two kinds, good and bad ; so the eternal World has two separate States ; one infinitely happy, the other infinitely miserable. And the great business of our life here, is so to serve and obey God, according to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we may escape an awful eternity of misery and woe ; and be fitted and prepared, for the enjoyment of happiness in the celestial Realms. Now we know, that as the descendants of the first apostate Man, and as actual transgressors of the law of God, we are all guilty sinners : we are all the children of wrath, who are liable to eternal misery, and future tor-

ment ; who are not able to redeem ourselves from misery and destruction. But God has found a ransom, and has sent his own dear Son from Heaven, to give his Life a sacrifice for many, for the remission of their sins. And in and through him as the appointed Mediator between God and Man, we are encouraged to draw near unto God, and to hope in his mercy, on the account of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done and suffered for us. But if we receive Salvation, Life, and Happiness, through him, we must become righteous and good, through the influence of his word and spirit ; before we can become meet for the enjoyment of that Heaven of happiness, where not any thing that is unclean or impure can ever enter. And that we may become holy and pure, and persevere in the paths of righteousness and peace, the sacred scriptures afford us many powerful motives, to guard against sin, and to yield obedience unto God ; to cause us to stand in awe of his sacred Majesty, and to encourage us in the divine and spiritual Life. To this end the scripture sets before us the unhappy and miserable state of impenitent sinners ; and the happy and glorious state of the truly pious ; that we may fear the awful terrors of “ divine wrath revealed  
 “ from heaven against all ungodliness, and un-  
 “ righteousness of men ;” and that we may be desirous to seek after that happiness and joy, which is promised to the Saints, who serve and obey God in sincerity and truth. Now St. John in his visions recorded in this 14th chapter of the Revelations, heard the most awful declarations concerning the wicked who worshiped the beast, where 'tis declared, ver. 10, 11. “ The same  
 “ shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God,  
 “ which



“ which is poured out, without mixture, (i. e.,  
 “ without mercy) into the cup of his indignation,  
 “ and he shall be tormented with fire and brim-  
 “ stone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in  
 “ the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of  
 “ their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever :  
 “ and they have no rest day nor night :” This is a  
 declaration full of terror, and dreadful horror  
 sufficient to make every sinner tremble with a-  
 mazement and dread. But how different the de-  
 claration concerning the Saints, who have lived a  
 life of purity and holiness, who have steadfastly  
 adhered to the faith of the Gospel, and been the  
 true disciples of Jesus. “ St. John says, ver. 13th,  
 “ And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto  
 “ me, Write, Blessed are the Dead which die in  
 “ the Lord, from henceforth : Yea saith the Spirit;  
 “ that they may rest from their labours; and their  
 “ works do follow them.” In discoursing from  
 these important words, I shall consider

I. What we are to understand by dying in the  
 Lord; and the character of those who are enabled  
 thus to die.

II. The immediate blessedness of those, who  
 are enabled to die the death of the righteous,  
 “ from henceforth they are blessed.”

III. The happy end of a righteous character,  
 and a steadfast adherence to the faith of the  
 Gospel; or the privilege of all the Saints, they  
 are removed from this sinful world, “ that, they  
 “ may rest from their labours; and their works  
 “ do follow them.”

IV. The absolute certainty of this future  
 blessedness of the Saints, from the Testimony of  
 the Spirit of God; “ Yea saith the Spirit.”

I, I am

I. I am to consider what we are to understand by dying in the Lord; and the character of those who are enabled thus to die.

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. Some learned expositors would confine this to the death of Martyrs: and would translate the words, "blessed are the dead which die for the Lord." (i. e.) for the cause of Christ and his Gospel (and though the Greek words are literally translated, "in the Lord," they may with propriety be rendered "for the Lord," according to the frequent use of the Greek preposition here used) and no doubt but those who die Martyrs for the cause of Christ, are to be included, and perhaps may be more immediately referred to. But I apprehend these words are not to be confined only to those who die Martyrs in the christian cause; but take in also, all the real disciples of Jesus, whether they die a natural or violent death; who may be said to die in the Lord, i. e. to die in favour with the Lord, to die with an interest in his redeeming love through Christ Jesus, to die having the soul committed into the hands of Christ, to die encircled in his arms of love; which is the case of every true believer and real christian. And the scripture assures us that all such shall be blessed, and rewarded at their Death. Not only the Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs, shall be blessed at their death, and receive a crown of glory, and a reward of love; but also the least among the Saints. Thus we are assured, Rev. 11. 18. "that there is  
 " a reward to be given to the servants of God, to  
 " the prophets, and to the saints, and to them  
 " that fear his name small and great;" and therefore every real christian may properly be said to die in the Lord, and shall be blessed at his death. But I am more particularly to consider the character



racter of those who are enabled thus to die: They are such as have been brought to a true repentance for their sins, and have been enabled to forsake them, and turn to God: for no man that dies in impenitency can die in the Lord, or receive comfort at death, for he that dies in his sins has nothing before him, but " a fearful looking for " of judgment and indignation to devour him." Heb. 10, 27. But he that dieth in the Lord, first becomes dead to sin by a sincere repentance, and is made alive to God by the power of his quickening spirit: Such as are enabled thus to die, also believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who alone " is able to save them to the uttermost, " that come unto God by him. They believe in him as the great prophet of the Most High, to teach them the way of salvation; as the great high priest of the christian profession, to atone and interceed for them; and as the king and head of the church, to rule in their hearts by faith, to protect and defend them from all their spiritual enemies, and by his divine power, receive them into his Kingdom of Glory. They live and die, with a firm dependance upon his allsufficient atonement; and allperfect righteousness for their deliverance from condemnation; and acceptance with God. And we are assured that none can die in the Lord, i. e. in favour with God, if they believe not in the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God. " For he that believeth on " the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the " wrath of God abideth on him." John 3, 36. For without an interest in his dying love by faith, not any can be saved. Every blessing in this life, and comfort at death, and enjoyment in a future world;

world, is merited and procured by our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. And that believers in Christ may die in the Lord, and be blessed at death, they are created anew in Christ Jesus, by the renewing of the holy spirit; who by this sacred influence, in the use of the word and gospel of Christ, awakens the conscience, enlightens the mind, changes the heart, and turns the will and affections, unto God: whereby they become new creatures, and are created in Christ Jesus unto every good work, and made pure and holy, just and righteous; in imitation of the divine perfections: whereby alone, any can become meet, and fit for the enjoyment of those blessings, which the Saints enjoy after death in the glorious presence of the great God; for they must be sanctified and purified, before they can be actually justified, and glorified. Whosoever enters into the kingdom of heaven, must be regenerated or "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." 1 Peter 1, 23. Whosoever dies the death of the righteous, must live the life of the righteous: and all that are of this character, live a life of faith and obedience. They live by the faith of the Son of God, and yield an obedience to his commands. They put their trust in God through Christ, for all the comforts of the present life; and for all the blessings of a future world. They are supported under all their trials, by faith in Christ; and are enabled to persevere in obedience, by faith in him under the influence, and by the assistance of his spirit. Their faith in Christ influences their practice, their temper, and disposition; and the whole of their christian conduct; whereby they become



become temperate, holy and pure in their own persons; just and righteous, in their transactions with men, attended with compassion and love; and upright, sincere and devotional, in all their religious duties to God. They conscientiously attend to the various duties of the christian life, personal, relative and social, private and public; with a peculiar regard to the ordinances of the gospel. They seriously attend to the religion of the closet, the family, and the church of Christ. And such persons also commit their souls into the hands of the great Redeemer, "who is able to keep them against the great day, and to present them faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy," Jude 24. All these important things, with many more accompanying them, are to be found in the character of such as die in the Lord; whose death is blessed. But I proceed,

II. To consider the immediate blessedness of those who are enabled to die the death of the righteous; "from *henceforth* they are blessed."

When the righteous die, they are immediately received into the paradise of God. The spirit saith *from henceforth*, or from this time, they are blessed; i. e. from the time of their death; or immediately (as the Greek word *αυταυτη* might be rendered) after their dissolution. The souls of the righteous do at their death, immediately pass into glory: and therefore the Apost. 2. Cor. 5, 8. says "we are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." There is no intermediate state of purgatory, as the popish doctrine falsely teacheth; nor a state of dormant rest, as others have supposed. But the immortal powers of the soul,

are immediately enlivened with a new and extensive scene of divine glory and love ; and are filled with the transporting joys of the heavenly paradise : and therefore our blessed Lord says in his answer to the penitent thief upon the cross, " to day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Luke 23, 43. And the scripture assures us, " that when " the body returns to the earth as it was, the " spirit shall return unto God who gave it ;" Ecclesiastes 12, 7. which intimates to us, that the spirit " has an immediate existence in a " future world after death ; according to the " disposal of the great God himself. The spirits " of the wicked are taken into prison," ( 1 Peter 3, 19. ) and reserved to the great day of judgment, when they will receive their full sentence of condemnation. But, the spirits of the righteous and godly, are immediately received into the paradise of God ; where they are participating of those heavenly joys, and pleasures, which will be fully compleated, when our Lord Jesus Christ shall come in magnificent glory, to compleat their Salvation ; when he shall be glorified in his Saints, and admired in all them that believe. The spirits of the righteous are blessed in the enjoyment of the Divine presence, and the smiles of the Redeemer. In which happy state they will no longer have any thing to do with the things of time, will no more be clogged with flesh and blood ; but will become purely spiritual, fit for the enjoyment of the divine presence, and be made happy and blessed in the enjoyment of the divine perfections : Whereby they will bear a likeness to God, and enjoy a similar happiness to that of the blessed Redeemer ; whose endeared friendship and love, will perpetually surround them, and encrease their joys.

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The souls of the righteous will also enjoy the company of happy spirits, those spirits of just men who are made perfect; whereby they will enjoy not only personal, but social happiness: all uniting in one design of glorifying God, and singing his praises; all uniting in harmony, peace and love; without any alloy of dissatisfaction one with another. The greatest saint will not lord it over the smallest; neither will the smallest saint envy the most exalted spirit; but all will be united in perfect love. The departed spirits of the righteous, are also blessed with the company and friendship of the holy Angels, who are sent forth by God to minister comfort to them who are the heirs of Salvation; who are also employed to convey the souls of the righteous to the heavenly paradise; where no doubt they greatly add to the felicity of that happy state, by their friendship and love. For they greatly rejoice in the salvation of men; and with gladness, admiration and praise, will receive the spirits of just men into their innumerable company; and delight to give them transporting joy and pleasure, in the pure realms of perfect love and peace; where sin and sorrow can never enter. The happy spirits of the righteous will be blessed with a perfect separation from all sin; neither sin nor Satan can ever have any more power over them; no temptation can befall them, but they will be separated at an infinite distance from all defilements; and ever remain perfectly pure and holy, innocent and righteous; fit for the enjoyment of the divine perfections; fit for the company of angels; and for the delightful employments of that world of glory, where every transaction is performed in truth and righteousness, in friendship and love, in a chearful readiness, and holy obedience to

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God.

God. The spirits of those that die in the Lord, are immediately blessed with the enjoyment of every pleasure, which flows from love and obedience to God; which is attended with inexpressible delight in the divine perfections. The foundation upon which the righteous loved and obeyed God while here, will afford them the most solid foundation for their love, joy and delight, in the world of glory. They will have the most affecting view of the divine holiness and purity, goodness and love; and the most enlivening sense of the wonders of redeeming love in their salvation; for which the powers of the soul will exult in joy and praise. But the blessedness of the spirits of the just made perfect, is far beyond our conception; 'tis an happiness which the Christian himself has but distant views, and small foretastes of, in the present life; "for eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man; the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 Cor. 2, 9, We cannot conceive how happy a pure and holy spirit can be made nor how great that blessedness must be, to enjoy the presence and favour of the Great God, and the presence and friendship of the great Redeemer; and the in-dwelling glories of the holy spirit, in the midst of innumerable companies of glorified spirits, and holy angels: and to join the celestial choirs, in singing the praises of the great Jehovah, with ever fresh delight, and constant transport.

III. I am to consider the happy end of a righteous character, and a steadfast adherence to the faith of the Gospel: or the privilege of all the saints; they are removed from this sinful world, "that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Those



Those that die in the Lord, rest from their labours of various kinds; and enter upon a state of rest and quietude; undisturbed by anxiety labour and toil. They will rest from all the labours of the present state. For in the world of happy spirits, there will be no laborious toil to perform, no fatigues to distress the mind, no body of human flesh to endure weariness, pain and affliction; but the spirit is set free from all the clogs of flesh, and is brought into a state of perfect liberty, in the full enjoyment of the great God. Such as die in the Lord will rest from all the labours of the christian warfare. They will no longer have to wrestle with flesh and blood, with principalities and powers; they will no longer have to labour under the evil propensities, and sinful inclinations of depraved nature. They will no longer be exposed to the temptations of a sinful world, nor any more have need for watching, and prayer, with penitential griefs, and overwhelming sorrows. They will no longer have to be clothed with the christian armour, in a warlike defence; and endure the labours and hardships, of the field of battle: in overcoming the lusts of the flesh, in mortifying the deeds of the body, in resisting temptations to sin; and withstanding the various powers of wickedness. But having fought the good fight of faith, and become more than conquerors through Jesus Christ, over all the powers of darkness, they will enjoy that crown of righteousness and peace, which is laid up for all those that love our Lords appearance. The spirits of such as die in the Lord, will rest in a glorious state of perfect peace and joy. And their bodies which are committed to the earth, are not capable of any pain; but

but will rest in their silent graves till the resurrection, when they shall be raised spiritual bodies, and be made perfectly happy with their spirits. And therefore the dead which die in the Lord, have a perfect rest from all their labours or trials of persecution; which the text has a peculiar reference to. Now after death, the righteous are entirely out of the power of all their persecutors, whether they died a natural, or violent death; for after the persecutors of the saints have killed the body, our Saviour assures us "they have no more that they can do." Luke 12, 4. And 'tis not only the Martyrs of Jesus, that may be said to have endured persecution; but all the real disciples of Jesus meet with something of this kind, more, or less; as the Apostle has assured us, 2 Timothy 3, 12. that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." The pious christian must pass through persecutions and reproaches, for the name and sake of his Lord and master; which is often a considerable trial of his faith, and subjects him to painful reflections, and trying griefs; whereby his soul within him mourns; which makes him pass through the christian life, with considerable labour and fatigue; but at death the christian is taken into a state of perfect rest, free from all these griefs and labours. Such happy spirits, also rest from the assaults of Satan. That great enemy of souls, who goeth about like a roaring lion, can no more tempt, perplex, and worry them. He cannot enter that state of rest and peace, where they are far distant from all his power; He can suggest no evil thoughts to their minds; he cannot allure them by his false and deceitful charms, nor attack them by open violence, persecution,



secution and distress. For their happy souls are perfectly secure, in the blest abode of the paradise of God, where not any thing can hurt or destroy. The happy spirits of such as die in the Lord, also rest from whatever might be laborious in doing, or suffering the will of God. Such are the circumstances of the present state and world, that even in doing the will of God, and yielding obedience to his gospel, there is much labour and pains to be taken; there is much care and diligence to be used in the performance of the christian duties: watching and prayer should especially be attended to, with constant diligence. Much pains and labour ought to be exercised, in shewing a becoming zeal for the interest of Christ, and the honour of his religion in the world: and no labour ought to be esteemed too great, nor any task too hard, for the interest of Jesus, and the cause of his religion. But whatever labours the disciples of Jesus may have passed through in religious piety, and zeal; they will rest from these labours, and worship, honour, and glorify God, with the utmost pleasure and transport, perfectly free from all labour and toil. They also rest from all their labours of suffering the will of God, which very often in the present world, are many and great, either afflictions of body, or distresses of mind, or adverse providences: all which sometimes meet together. But in the paradise of God, they will rest from all these labours, for there they will have no sufferings to pass through of any kind, but perfectly rest from all their labours. The spirit of God further says concerning the dead that die in the Lord, that "their works do follow them," i. e. the reward of their works. For though christians are so far  
from

from meriting by their works, that they come far short of what was their real duty to have done ; yet such is the goodness of God, that there is a promised reward, through Jesus Christ ; who by his merits, renders them acceptable with God. Whereby they inherit the reward of the promises of God, which are yea, and amen, in him. And whatsoever they did worthy of the christian character, and honourable to the religion of Jesus, will be honoured and rewarded, in a future world : as the Apostle hath assured us 1 Timothy 4, 8. “ that godliness is profitable “ unto all things, having promise of the life that “ now is, and of that which is to come.” Their works of faith will be rewarded. By faith the patriarchs and saints, in the first ages of the world, performed and suffered many things, with a view to a future reward. Thus “ Moses esteemed the “ reproach of Christ, greater riches than the “ treasures of Egypt : for he had a respect unto “ the recompence of reward”. Heb. 11, 26. Their faith will be rewarded with the full vision of heavenly glories, they will no longer worship God by faith, but by immediate sight, and will receive the rich inheritance of the saints. Their faith in Christ will be rewarded with forgiveness and pardon, with life and happiness ; through the atoning efficacy of his sacrifice upon the cross, and the merits of his everlasting righteousness. And whatever zeal they have shewn for the honour, and interest of Christ, through faith in him, will be rewarded with love. Their hope of future blessedness, will be rewarded with the noblest enjoyments ; they will find that their faith and hope was not in vain, but were founded upon a solid foundation. And through Jesus Christ



Christ the Lord, they will enjoy those glorious things, which they hoped for, in a compleat deliverance from all sin, and a perfect enjoyment of the blessed God, in his perfections and glories. They will be received into those heavenly mansions, which Christ is gone to prepare for his people, and enjoy those glorious things, which are spoken of the city of God; in the fulness of divine grace and love. Their patience will be rewarded with the enjoyment of the promises, for through faith and patience they inherit the promises;-----the promises of eternal life, of immortal glory; and of all the happiness of the heavenly world. Christians are often called to much patience, in passing through the present world, under various trials, afflictions, and distresses; and all their patience will be remembered in a future world, with suitable rewards of bliss. Their humility will also be rewarded, with celestial honours; whatever might be their situation in this life, if they were the humble servants of Jesus, they will be honoured and exalted; they will be made kings and priests unto God, through Jesus Christ the Lord; "Who hath loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood." Rev. v. 5. He will seat them with himself in the heavenly state, that they may be with him where he is, to behold his glory, and to enjoy those unspeakable honours, and blessings, which he hath purchased with his own blood; which he shed upon the cross for the remission of their sins, when he gave his life a ransom for many. Their mournings also will be rewarded with celestial comforts; they will be no more subject to any kind of pain or distress. "For he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither  
C thirst

"thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on  
 "them, nor any heat. For the lamb which is in  
 "the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and  
 "shall lead them unto living fountains of waters :  
 "and God shall wipe away all tears from their  
 "eyes." Rev. vii. 15, 16, 17. The labours of their  
 christian warfare will be rewarded, with a rich  
 crown of glory, peace, and love. Our blessed  
 Lord has promised, saying ; " to him that over-  
 "cometh, will I grant to sit with me in my  
 "throne, even as I also overcame, and am set  
 "down with my Father in his throne." Rev. 3,  
 21. and the Apostle James says, " blessed is the  
 "man that endureth temptation : " (i. e. who is  
 able to stand his ground and overcome in the  
 christian warfare) " for when he is tried, he shall  
 "receive the crown of life, which the Lord  
 "hath promised to them that love him." chap. 1.  
 12. Whatever temptations the christian withstands,  
 whatever enemies he overcomes, whatever victories  
 he gains, in his spiritual warfare ; he will be sure  
 to meet with a reward according to his victory.  
 The steadfast adherence of christians to the faith  
 of the gospel, in truth and faithfulness, under  
 persecutions for the sake of religion ; will be re-  
 warded with the tokens of divine love, and the  
 brighter will be their glories, and the greater  
 their joys in the heavenly world. " They will be  
 "placed before the throne of God, and serve  
 "him day and night in his temple." Rev. vii. 15.  
 Where they will be enriched with the noblest gifts  
 of divine favour, and be made partakers of the  
 overflowing streams of the fountain of life, to  
 their eternal felicity and joy. The exercise of  
 their obedience on earth, will also be rewarded  
 with unwearied pleasure in the worship of God,



in admiration and praise. The worship of God in that glorious state, will be attended with the utmost pleasure, transport and delight. That foretast of pleasure which christians sometimes enjoy, in the worship of God, while here; they will then enjoy in perfection; without the least hindrance, without the least mixture of infirmities, without the least possibility of labour and fatigue. For all will be pleasure, joy, and comfort; affording ever fresh delight, and new scenes of celestial bliss. So that the saints will be sensible, with joy unspeakable, that their love and obedience to God in this world, through Jesus Christ, are richly rewarded in their eternal happiness, and comfort, in the world of glory. The works of those that die in the Lord, will follow them also, in that;---their zeal for the interest of Jesus, their concern for the good of souls, their acts of compassion and kindness, and alms-deeds to the disciples of Jesus, will be brought into remembrance before God; and will be owned with rewards of superior bliss. 'Tis pleasing to God, to see christians acting with a becoming zeal for the interest of Jesus; and such are peculiarly regarded by the great Redeemer; who will encircle them with his arms of love, and reward the labours of their zeal with peculiar honours. It shows much of the christian disposition, and is very pleasing to God, when christians have a concern for the good of souls; and manifest this in their life and conduct; by taking every method for promoting of religion, for instructing the ignorant, and for supporting the cause of religion in the world. And the christian's labours of this kind, are never forgotten of God, but will be found in the records of heaven; and be placed to

their account in the reward of their works. And so will also all their acts of compassion, and kindness, and alms-deeds, to the disciples of Jesus. For every instance of this kind, our Lord regards as done to himself; and will reward it accordingly: for our Lord says, verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Matthew 25. 40. And our Lord gives us the assurance of his rewarding every act of kindness, for he says to his disciples, Matthew 10. 40, 41, 42. "He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet; shall receive a prophets reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." Such is the regard which our blessed Lord pays, to every act of compassion and kindness, upon christian principles. All therefore that die in the Lord, will be rewarded with the riches of divine grace, according to their works; in which important view, their works will follow them: and their blessedness will be exceeding great.

IV. I am to consider the absolute certainty of this future blessedness of the saints, from the testimony of the spirit of God: "yea saith the spirit."

This delightful, this animating truth, the future blessedness of the saints, and their possession of the heavenly paradise, immediately after death, is an important reality. This is no cunningly devised



vifed fable, by artful deceiving men ; this is no false tradition of the antients, nor of any human invention. But this facred truth is the immediate declaration of the infallible fpirit of God, who is perfectly true and faithful, holy, juft and righteous. 'Tis the declaration of that divine fpirit, who converts, and faniſties, and prepares the faints, for this bleſſedneſs ; that facred fpirit who takes of the things of Chriſt, and impreſſes them upon the heart and mind, with a convincing light, and powerful efficacy, to change the heart, convert the ſoul, and turn the mind to God. Who alſo ſtrengthens the chriſtian to withſtand temptations, and enables him to perform the various duties of the chriſtian religion ; and ſaniſties him throughout ; in body, ſoul, and ſpirit ; and makes him meet and fit for the enjoyment of bleſſedneſs, in the heavenly realms of immortal joy. 'Tis the declaration of that divine fpirit, who knoweth the deep things of God, who knoweth all things, and cannot be deceived : who is eſſentially poſſeſſed of all ſpiritual bleſſings, and who is the original ſource, and ſpring of every valuable enjoyment. 'Tis the declaration of that holy ſpirit of God, who dwelleth in the faints here, and hereafter ; who ſheds abroad divine love in the heart, who gives the foretaſt of heaven : who inwardly witneſſes to the faints that they are the children of God, and heirs of glory : who gives them the joy of their faith, the comfort of their hope, and the delightful views and proſpects of immortal glory : who alſo gives them the earneſt, pledge and proof thereof, to their preſent comfort, ſatisfaction and peace. And this bleſſed ſpirit alſo, fills the ſoul with tranſport and joy, in a future world, and makes the happineſs of the faints compleat.

compleat. Now since 'tis the immediate declaration of this holy spirit of God, we have sufficient reason to conclude, that the future blessedness of those that die in the Lord, is sure and certain; which we ought to believe and think on, with joy and praise.----I shall now close this discourse with the following observations.

Ist. 'Tis evident that the death of the righteous is attended with great consolation and comfort, to surviving relatives and friends.

'Tis melancholy and distressing to commit our near and dear Relatives to the silent grave. But if we have reason to conclude, from their steadfast piety, and faith in Christ, that they died in the Lord; this should alleviate our grief, and reconcile our minds to the divine disposal. You, dear madam, are now mourning the loss of a dear partner, and valuable companion of life; this is painful and trying to human nature; but your consolation is great; from the good foundation you have to conclude, that the body is committed to the dust of the ground, in hope of a glorious resurrection to eternal life; and that the spirit (which once enlivened the human frame,) is already entered upon a glorious immortality of blessedness and joy. This is sufficient to moderate your grief, and to turn your thoughts upon that happy period, when you shall meet him with joy and gladness, in the happy world of glorified spirits: and, dear madam, you have great reason to be thankful to God for his goodness, in sparing his valuable life so long with you: "who was brought to his grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn is brought in, in his season." May the same God of goodness and love, who carried him through life, with christian patience,  
and



and caused him to die with comfort, support you under every trial while here, and be your ever lasting portion hereafter; to his and your unspeakable joy in the world of glory.

Nothing can be so great a comfort, under the loss of near Relatives, as a firm persuasion upon solid grounds, that they died in the Lord, and that especially when they have passed through a series of years, with honour, and usefulness in the christian life, and this my mourning friends, was the true character of your dear deceased parent; and you have reason to look back upon his past life with comfort, and to reflect upon his christian conduct with pleasure. And 'tis of great importance that you should so reflect upon it, as to follow his example, in every part of his character, in which he was praise worthy; call to mind his private and publick character, consider his personal sobriety, and temperance; his regular course of life, his pious resolutions, and christian fortitude; and also his humility, submission, and patience; which, I apprehend, in some instances, were very considerable. Remember also his religious regard to family, and relative duties; and think seriously of his strict regard to family prayer, and the regularity of attendance to it, which he always commanded. Call to mind (with affection to his memory, and love to religion,) the many pious instructions; which I doubt not he has given you: And follow his example, in instructing your children, in religious principles; and also your servants, in which he took considerable pains; I hope, not without success. Remember his strict observance of religious duties, on the sabbath day; both of family devotion, and publick worship. I  
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am well perswaded, he did not neglect any important part of religious services on that day : but performed the duties of piety ; with seriousness, delight and pleasure. Call to mind the many pious prayers, he has offered up for you, at the throne of grace, which are put upon record in heaven. And endeavour so to follow his example of piety, that you may enjoy the blessings he has desired for you. And follow his example also in pious prayers to heaven for your children and servants ; which is the way and means, under divine goodness, to obtain a blessing for them. You may with pleasure also reflect upon his more publick character and extensive usefulness, as a member of society. He was useful in the world ; and in the church of Christ. He had a readiness to do good to others, to assist his friends and neighbours. And he showed a becoming zeal for the interest of Christ, and his religion : And was an useful member of christian society. I am perswaded, I may justly say, he was a worthy example for you to follow ; in sincerity, uprightness and christian zeal. In these and many other things, you may reflect upon his life and conduct, with pleasure and comfort ; and have reason to conclude, that he died in the Lord, and is entered upon a state of blessedness ; in which he now rests from his labours, and his works do follow him. His piety in life, and calmness, composure and comfort at death ; are the strongest consolations you can possibly have. May you be enabled to follow him in the faith and patience of the gospel, that you may with him inherit the promises, and joyfully meet together in the realms of immortal bliss. And let your affection to him deceased, be manifested by a most dutiful regard,  
and



and every act of kindness to your dear surviving parent, under her trial of afflictions and infirmity of years; who is worthy of your tender care.

And now I would not pass over you, my dear Friends, who are the younger branches of the family. Your dear deceased Relative, I doubt not, was earnestly desirous of your future happiness and welfare. You see that all men must die; if life be spared to advanced age, yet it must at length submit to death. It is therefore of great importance for you to consider your latter end. Though you are now young, the time is coming when you also must die, and enter upon the eternal world. And 'tis necessary you should be prepared for this future state, by faith in Christ, and obedience to God. And to this end, read much in the holy Bible with attention; think what you are, and what you must be; attend upon publick worship, with seriousness; give ear to all the religious instructions of your parents and pious friends. Endeavour to impress your tender minds, with pious thoughts; with the thoughts of God, and the worship of him. And endeavour conscientiously to pray to God; thank him for the mercies you enjoy; ask him for the blessings you stand in need of; in the name, and through the mediation of Jesus Christ.

And pray to God to give you his spirit, to teach you his will, and to make you his children. 'Tis highly pleasing to God, to see young persons come to the throne of grace, seeking the way of salvation. And the blessed Jesus is ready to receive such into his favour, and to lead them in the way of salvation. 'Tis religion, and that only, that can enable you to live in peace, to die with  
D comfort;

comfort, and to enjoy happiness and glory in heaven. Remember what the Apostle says, 1 Timothy 4. 8, "That godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come." Whatever pious instructions you may some time or other have received; from your deceased relative, endeavour to call them to mind. Think how honourably he lived, and how comfortably he died; in consequence of a religious and pious life, and what happiness he now enjoys, in the world of spirits; in the favour and blessing of God, in the love of the Redeemer, and the friendship of the holy angels, and in every valuable enjoyment: may this, my dear young friends, be your happy case; when time shall be no more.

IIIdly; That the life and death of the righteous, ought to be specially regarded by the living.

The life and death of the righteous, ought to be regarded by the living in general; but especially by those, with whom they were connected: And you, my friends of this christian church and society, are especially called seriously to consider the present event of providence, and to remember the life of our deceased friend, with suitable reflections; and to be properly affected with his death. He was for a series of years, a very useful member of this society, and a principal supporter of its interest. And you have been witnesses to his seriousness and piety; to his love for the Gospel, and his earnest zeal for the interest of Jesus. You have been witnesses to his generosity and candor, and to his forbearance and patience: when his righteous soul has been vexed for unhappy circumstances,

of



of one kind and another ;-----I need not to say what nor how ;---every man's conscience is witness to himself :-----but I forbear.-----'Tis not my design to cast reflections upon any person. But I would (from the principles of christian love, and as one who sincerely wishes well to this society) earnestly desire you to remember your deceased friend, in every part of his christian character, wherein he was amiable and pious ; and endeavour to imitate him : and especially to unite in that candor, peace, and love, which he always wished for ; which he earnestly prayed for ; and which he endeavoured by various ways and methods to bring to pass. You were borne upon his heart with tenderness and love, he continued his concern for you to his dying moments ; you were not forgotten of him, in his last thoughts. Think of this,----think with regret ; that he could not entertain more comfortable thoughts of your unity, peace and love ; of your zeal for the interest of Jesus, and love for the gospel : endeavour, my dear friends, to imitate his zeal, his candor, and his generosity. You have now cause to exert your power, for the interest of Jesus, and the support of the Gospel. Your loss is great, in the removal of such an useful member of your society : you cannot exercise too much prudence, caution, and care. Unite in friendship and devotion, be much in prayer to God, come before him with humiliation : Ask wisdom of that God who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not ; commit yourselves to the care, and direction of the great head of the church : strive so to live and act ; that you may be an honour to his religion ; that he may honour and bless you with his presence, friendship and love.

So live to him, that you may die in the Lord. 'Tis proper that the life and death of the righteous, shou'd be regarded by the living. By suitable reflections upon their righteous character; by endeavouring to follow their example, with an earnest desire to die like them; by a daily preparation for it; and by entertaining the pleasing views, of being made heirs with them, in the heavenly inheritance, upon the foundation of the Gospel. And in all these views we ought to retain the memory of our deceased friend. And may God of his infinite mercy in Christ Jesus, make us meet, and fit for the enjoyment of heaven, and so prepare us for death and judgment, and a future world, that we may meet together, with all the saints, in the regions of immortal bliss; where unity, love and peace, will be forever perfect.

IIIly, This important truth, that the righteous are blessed at death, affords comfort and support; under all the trials of life,

Whatsoever trials the righteous meet with, they are attended with the comforts and consolations of the gospel; and they are preparatory to a brighter scene of glory. For if they are endured with faith and patience, and improved to spiritual purposes, so as to enliven the christian graces; the time is but short, and they will certainly end, in a rich reward of divine grace and love, in the world of glory.---And this is great encouragement for christians to persevere in the faith and practice of the gospel, since 'tis evident, that it is in the power of divine grace, to carry them through every difficulty, to enable them to overcome every temptation, and to escape every snare. There is encouragement also, because



because a perseverance in christian piety, is attended with comfort in life, and hope at death, and has the assurance, of a future reward of glory and blessedness.

IVthly, Let us all endeavour so to live to the Lord, that we may die in the Lord, and receive the reward of our works.

Let us live in obedience to the commands of God, in personal purity and holiness, in relative and social duties; in a constant and steadfast adherence to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; in the whole of our conduct and transactions; in the whole of our tempers and dispositions. Let us imitate the divine perfections of holiness and goodness, of truth and faithfulness, of justice and righteousness, of love and tenderness; that we may be transformed into his image and likeness; and may be made meet and fit for the enjoyment of him. And let us also shew a zeal for his honour and glory, for the interest of Christ, and his religion. That so we may live a life of faith and obedience to God, and when we leave this world, may die with comfort; and so die in the Lord, that we may be immediately blessed, that we may rest from our labours, and that our works may follow us with a rich reward, in the glorious realms of eternal joy. Amen.

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